



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY,
TRADE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Early Childhood Education And Assistance Program: 2002 Washington State Pre-Kindergarten Report

April 2003



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Early Childhood Education And Assistance Program: 2002 Washington State Pre-Kindergarten Report

A Report to the Legislature from
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*"Supporting the successful learning and development of young children
and their families to ensure livable, thriving communities."*

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Acknowledgements:

Children's Services Unit acknowledges the children and families who participate in ECEAP and strive for a better future. We also appreciate the communities across the state that have supported and developed ECEAP programs over the years, and the individual program staff and volunteers who work hard every day to continue to make ECEAP a success. Special thanks to Dr. David Fine, Lynne Shanafelt, Joyce Deshayee, and Michael Zimmerman for their contributions to this report.

April 30, 2003

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Introduction

The Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) was created by the Legislature in 1985 as a pilot project with support from then Governor Booth Gardner and the Washington Business Roundtable. The Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED) administers ECEAP through its Children's Services Unit (CSU). CSU staff coordinate and manage funding, standards, and compliance issues, and offer technical assistance for ECEAP's community-based contractors.

Program Characteristics

ECEAP is a whole child, comprehensive, family-focused pre-kindergarten program designed to help low-income or at-risk four-year-old children and their families prepare for and succeed in school and life.¹ Because many factors affect a child's learning ability and development, ECEAP has four interactive components: 1) Education, 2) Health and Nutrition, 3) Family Support, and 4) Parent Involvement. This comprehensive early childhood program design replicates successful quality early childhood education models such as the federal Head Start program and the nationally recognized Perry Preschool Project.

ECEAP's approach is based on the following principles:

- A young child can benefit substantially from a comprehensive early childhood program that fosters development, identifies and remedies health and developmental problems, and increases skills in preparation for success in school.
- A child's family is the primary contributor to the child's development and progress.
- Access to community resources designed to support the child's development and learning, as well as the family's well being, should be maximized.
- Low-income children should have the opportunity to counteract the toll poverty takes on them and their families.

The components of the ECEAP program are reflected in Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 365-170 and the ECEAP Program Standards. The Program Standards cover administration, program design and evaluation, early childhood education, family support, and health and safety. Within these standards, programs have flexibility to design and deliver educational and comprehensive family support services best suited to their community's needs.

During the 2002 program year (July 2001 through June 2002), ECEAP served 7,314 children and their families statewide through 6,169 child and family enrollment slots. Due to mid-year turnover, the number of actual children enrolled is typically higher than funded enrollment space. Sixty percent of the families served by ECEAP have incomes at 80% or less of the federal poverty level. In 2001, a family of four at or below the poverty level earned no more than \$17,650 annually.²

¹ All contracted sites must offer 32 weeks of direct services per program year and a minimum of 240 hours of child direct services. ECEAP Program Performance Standards are available online at http://www.cted.wa.gov/uploads/1.2_Standards.htm

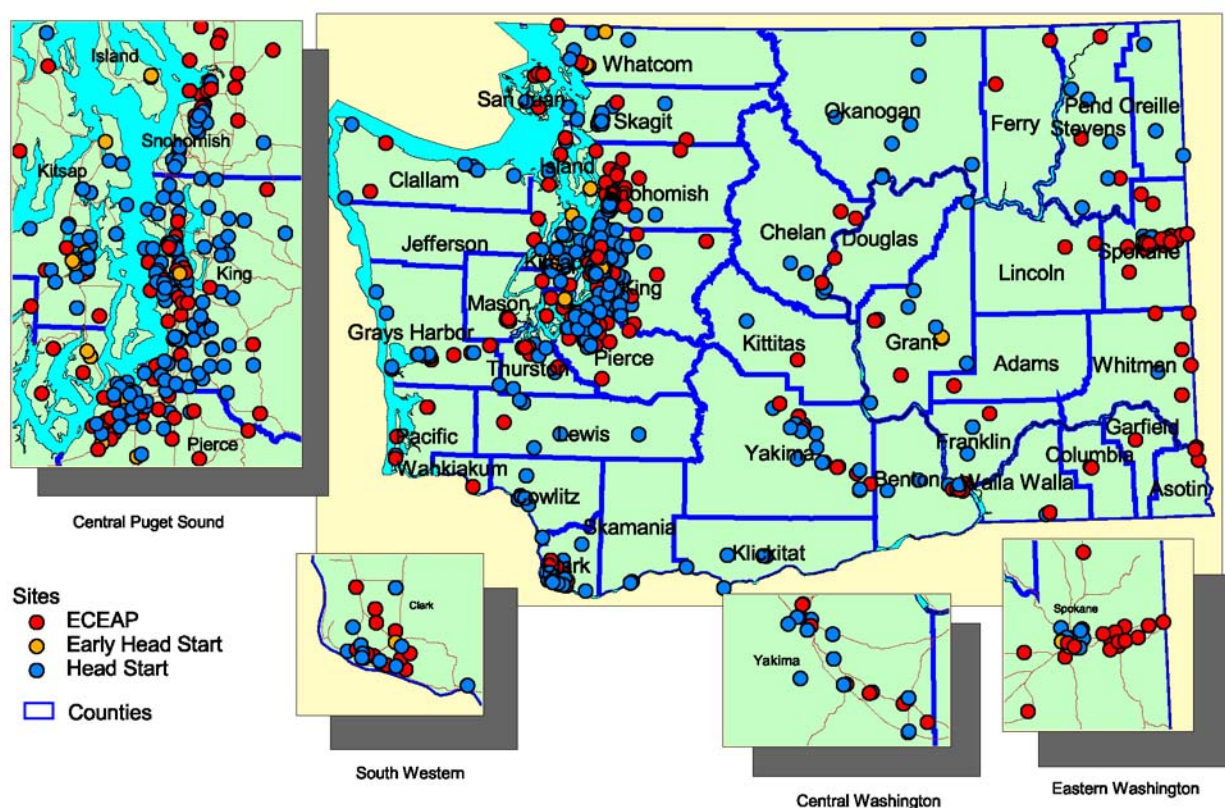
² Federal poverty guidelines available at <http://aspe.os.dhhs.gov/poverty/index.shtml>

Funding

During the past 17 years, ECEAP funding has been provided through a combination of resources: state general funds, state Maintenance of Effort funds for the federal Child Care Development Fund, and local in-kind funding leveraged to the greatest extent possible. ECEAP's program design flexibility fosters community development through partnerships that encourage community support of and participation in their local programs.

ECEAP contractors received \$30,672,478 in state pass-through dollars for program year 2002. Statewide average funds per child and family enrollment slot was \$4,972. Contractors reported leveraging an additional \$10,276,834 worth of in-kind goods, services, and donations.

Figure 1: ECEAP & Head Start Sites, Program Year 2002



Source: Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) & Head Start, Program Year 2002

January 27, 2003

Contractors

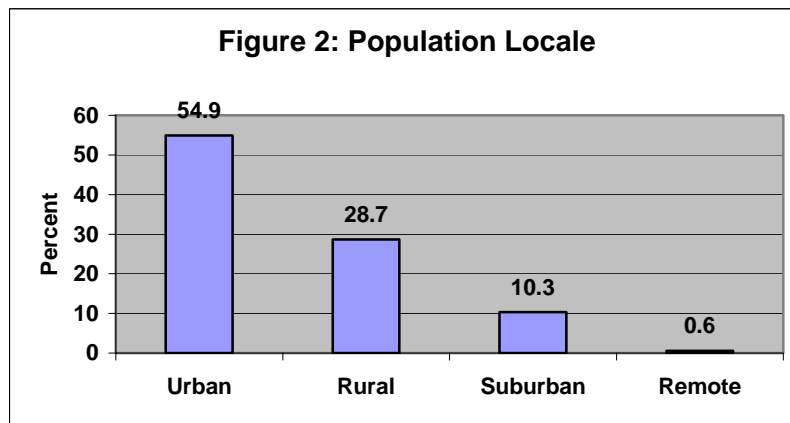
CTED has 35 contractors who deliver early childhood education and family support services at 270 sites statewide. Fifty-four percent of ECEAP contractors also contract with Head Start. Fifty-two percent of the contracted sites are in public schools, educational service districts, or colleges/universities, 20 percent in child care centers, and the remainder are in community facilities, including churches, community centers, and family child care homes. Because ECEAP was designed to be flexible and responsive to community needs, significant numbers of program sites are in rural and remote communities.

2002 Program Year Demographics

The following charts help to paint a quantitative picture of families enrolled in ECEAP for the 2002 program year. Appendix A features more qualitative “snap shots” of programs statewide. Just as sound quantitative data offers the information needed for funding decisions, qualitative data ensures that the “human” element is not lost.

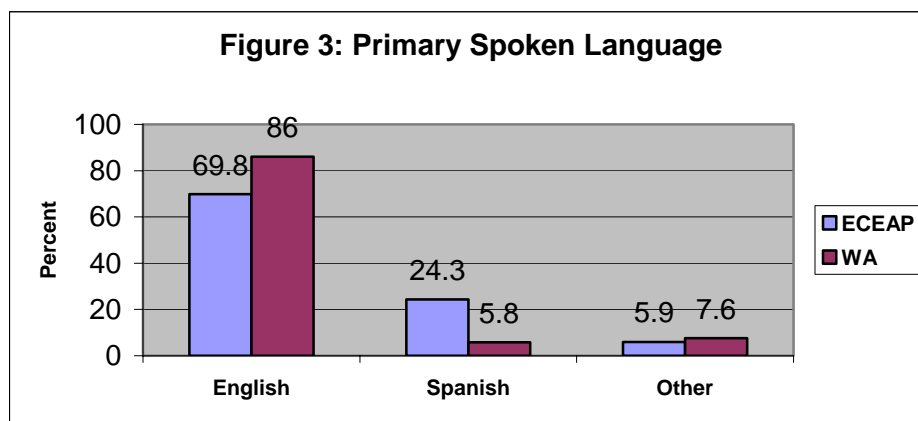
Population Locale

ECEAP programs served 7,314 children and their families during program year 2002. The following chart shows the geographic area where families in ECEAP live. Just under half live outside urban settings, with nearly a third of families residing in rural and remote areas of Washington State.



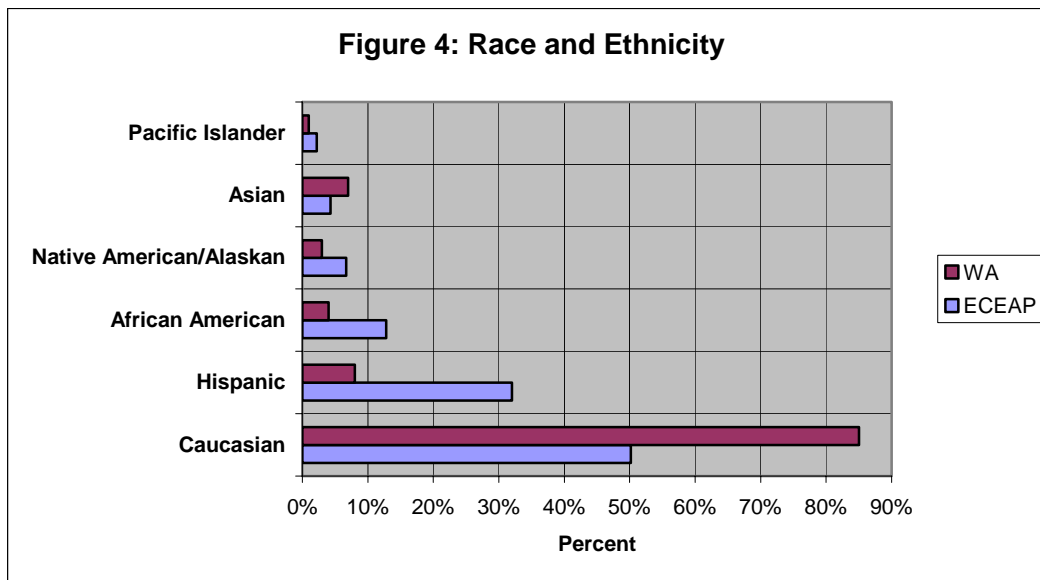
Language

Approximately 70% of families in ECEAP speak English as their primary language. Just under 25% are Spanish speaking. The remaining languages spoken by families in ECEAP include: Russian, Vietnamese, Chinese, Punjabi, Samoan, Arabic, Korean, Cambodian, and Ukrainian. As the chart shows, ECEAP programs do an excellent job of reaching out to families that speak English minimally or not at all.



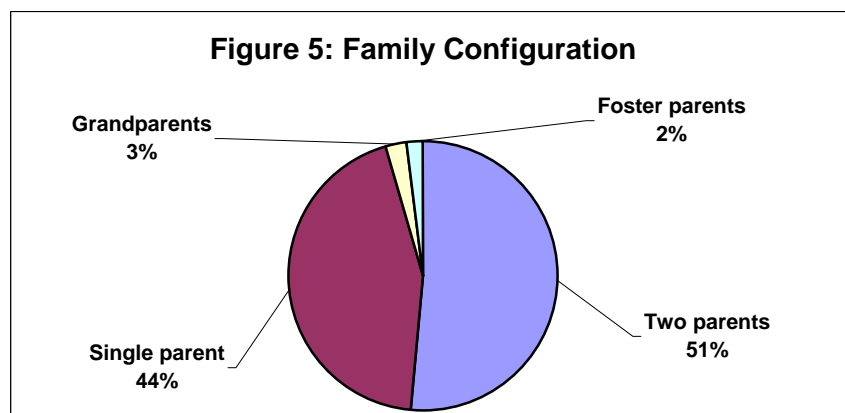
Race and Ethnicity

Families participating in ECEAP represent a wide cross-section of varying races and ethnicities. The following chart compares Washington State's total population to families in ECEAP during the 2002 program year.³ ECEAP programs have been successful in reaching out to populations that are often underrepresented.



Family Configuration

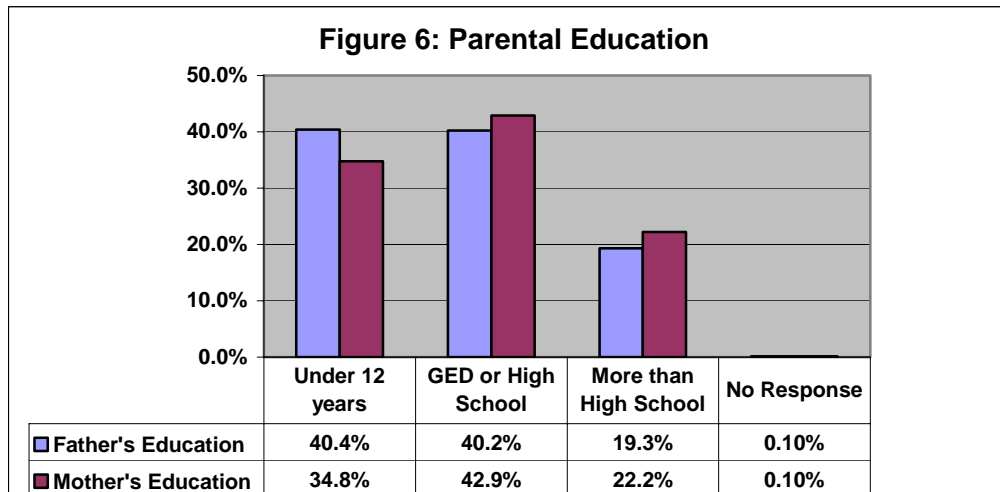
Families come in all shapes and sizes. ECEAP supports healthy family development regardless of the configuration. Over half of all children in ECEAP reside in a household that includes two parents. Just under half reside with a single parent. Grandparents and foster parents make up the remaining 5%.



³ Washington State population data from <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/53000.html>

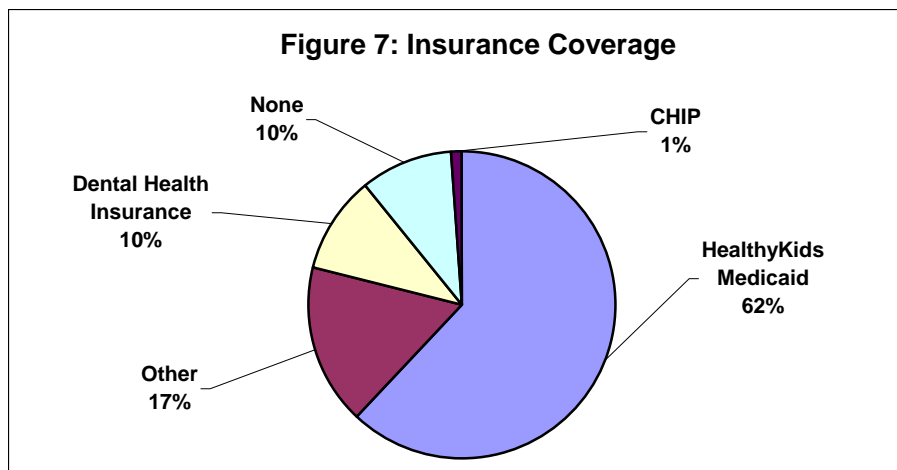
Parental Education

Over one-third of parents in ECEAP have completed less than twelve years of schooling. About 40 percent have a GED or a high school diploma. ECEAP supports and encourages parents to continue learning, with their children and on their own. As parents gain greater skills and knowledge, they positively affect the educational outcomes of their children. Parents receive encouragement to pursue education and training to gain skills in program governance, community development and advocacy.



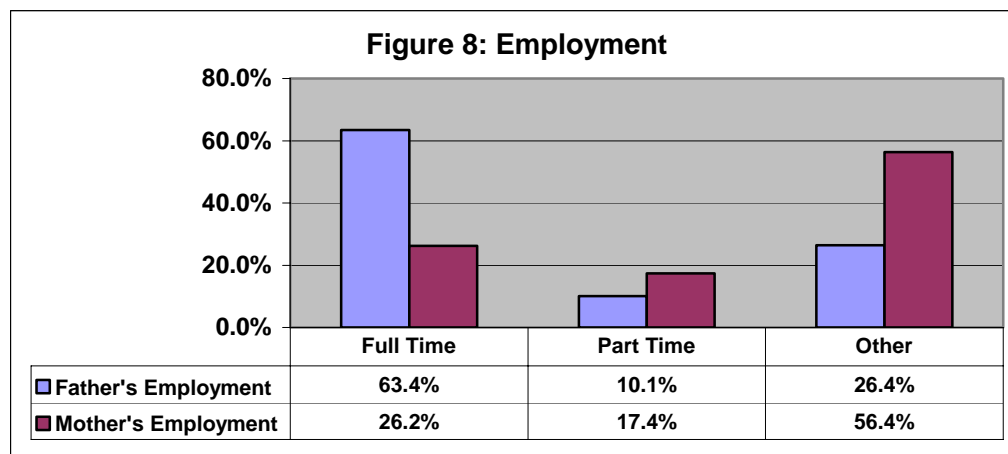
Medical/Dental Services

During program year 2002, of the 7,314 children served statewide, 39% were in need of a medical exam and 64% were in need of a dental exam at the time of enrollment. By the end of the school year, 1,562 children had received medical exams and 2,651 children had received dental exams as a result of their enrollment in ECEAP. The majority of the remaining children who did not receive needed medical and dental exams were in the program less than 90 days. Insurance coverage for all children at time of enrollment is reported in Figure 7 below.



Employment and WorkFirst/TANF Participation

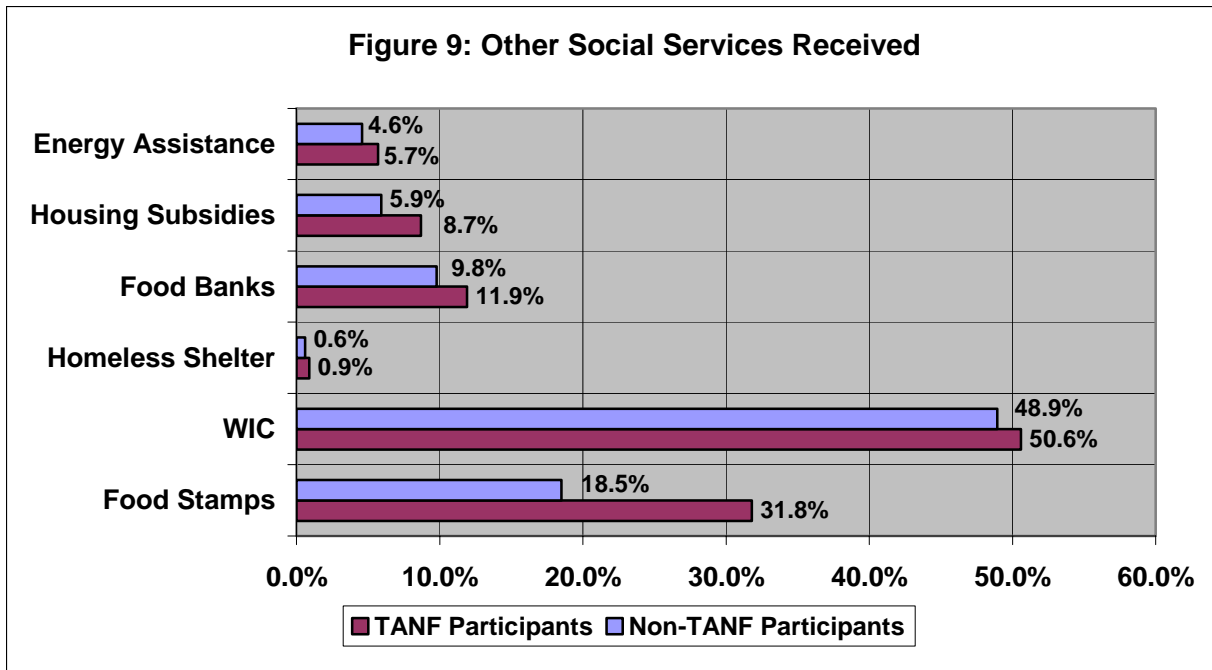
The United States Census data (2001) show that 66% of residents in Washington State are active in the labor force (no breakdown of full-time or part-time employment is available). In families with children under six years of age, 57.6% of all parents are working. However, families in ECEAP (limited to families with income at or below 110% of poverty) report nearly 75% of fathers engaged in work and 44% of mothers employed either full-time or part-time. The remainder are homemakers, unemployed, disabled, in training, retired, or did not report.



Many ECEAP family members have jobs, and less than 20% of ECEAP families receive TANF cash assistance. However, most ECEAP families continue to rely on an array of other social services to provide basic necessities, whether employed or not. According to Dr. Robert Wertheimer, while parental employment is strongly associated with reduced poverty for children, it does not provide a guarantee of escaping poverty entirely.⁴ Employed ECEAP families use energy, housing, food and health care services at nearly the same rate as ECEAP families with WorkFirst/TANF participants. And as fiscal times continue to be tight, the possibility of balancing state budgets through a reduction in needed social services could result in a crisis for employed ECEAP families.

Figure 9 illustrates employed ECEAP families' use of basic social services, compared to ECEAP families with WorkFirst/TANF participants.

⁴ Dr. Robert Wertheimer, *Children in Working Poor Families: Update and Extension*, A report to the Foundation for Child Development, ChildTrends, Washington, D.C., 2002. Available at <http://www.childtrends.org/PDF/WorkingPoorPaper.pdf>



Program Results

Since 1987, one of ECEAP's major goals has been to prepare four-year old children for kindergarten. In 1990, the National Education Goals Panel (NEGP) established its first National Education Goal: "By the year 2000, all children in America will start school ready to learn."⁵ Additionally, NEGP pointed to "high-quality and developmentally appropriate preschool" as important in meeting the "ready to learn goal" – especially for children living in poverty.⁶ The NEGP goals and components remain paramount to ECEAP's goals and program results.

From 1989 to 2000, the ECEAP Longitudinal Study conducted by the Northwest Regional Education Laboratory (NWREL) established that placement in high quality and developmentally appropriate preschool programs resulted in children who were ready to learn. The longitudinal study showed that low-income children participating in ECEAP demonstrated enhanced cognitive and social skills. Additionally, children's assessments showed a positive impact on school achievement, grade retention and decreased special education placement. Key findings are listed below:

- Pre- and post-tests showed that children made significant cognitive and motor skills gains during their ECEAP year.
- Children in ECEAP were shown on several national benchmarks to have moved from below the 50th percentile to above it by the end of their ECEAP year.
- ECEAP was shown to be effective in cognitive development regardless of ethnicity or primary language.

⁵ National Education Goals Panel, *Special Early Childhood Report*, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1997, p. 3. Available at <http://www.negp.gov/Reports/spcl.pdf>

⁶ Ibid

- Through third grade, a higher percentage of former ECEAP children were referred to the Gifted and Talented Program than in the comparison group.
- The strongest gains in cognitive and physical development were made by children whose parents:
 - Were working or planning to pursue more education.
 - Participated in their child's educational experience.
 - Expected their child to complete high school or pursue higher education.
- Fifty-seven percent fewer ECEAP children and families were at or below the federal poverty level in Year 10 of the Study than at the time of their enrollment.

ECEAP provided crucial and invaluable services to 7,314 individual children and their families in Washington State during the 2001-2002 program year. ECEAP focuses on “whole-child” development, assisting 3- and 4-year old children to enter kindergarten better prepared to learn and grow. Comprehensive services to children and families can mitigate harmful circumstances standing in the way of later academic achievement.

Through local collaboration and statewide effort, enrolled children received the following services:

- Health and developmental screenings
- Social and emotional growth opportunities
- Group education experiences
- Opportunities for learning in the classroom and at home

Parents and guardians of enrolled children learned about the home-school connection and enhancing their child’s education. Families were encouraged and supported to plan and grow. Governance and leadership positions, locally and at a state-level were available to ECEAP parents. These positions offered further opportunities to grow and develop life-long competencies. Some programs provided career counseling, adult education opportunities, and ESL classes.

ECEAP continues to prove effective and necessary for low-income children and families. The program addresses the whole development of the child, and supports the parent in guiding both their child’s education and their own personal growth. Through comprehensive early childhood education, development and training opportunities for families, and close linkages within communities where ECEAP is located, the program has positively affected the lives of thousands in Washington State.

ECEAP “Snapshots”

“In all aspects of the administration of the program, the human element – those intangibles called self-esteem, competence, personality, creativity, respect for others/cultural sensitivity, and intelligence – should not be pushed aside because they are difficult or impossible to measure, or subject to personal interpretation. Programs are constantly challenged to create a balance between the need for precise, objective processes and respect for the creative, more “fluid” approach of inclusion.” **Early Childhood Opportunities Northwest**



The following pages offer brief snapshots of ECEAP programs throughout Washington State. Approaches to meeting the ECEAP Program Standards vary throughout programs, but they all strive to meet the following system elements in practical and creative ways:

- Leadership and Governance
- Fiscal Management
- Continuous Improvement
- Record Keeping
- Service Delivery
- Facilities, Materials and Equipment
- Human Resources
- Child Development and Curriculum
- Community Partnerships
- Communication
- Family Partnerships

The following vignettes collected through program self-assessments, program reviews, end-of-year reports and field communications illustrate program structure and successes during the past year.

A Peek Into the ECEAP Classroom

- Science activities in the classroom include : graphing favorite fruits, observing bugs, growing vegetables and caring for plants and classroom pets. Child development programs meet each child's unique characteristics, strengths and needs through parental input into menu planning including culturally relevant foods, staff utilization of digital photographs, child work samples, parental input, teacher observations, child comments – all are tracked and recorded regarding child's progress.

Enterprise for Progress in the Community (EPIC)

- Using Creative Curriculum, each classroom is set up with learning centers that are developed to meet the individual needs and interests of the children in the classroom. Activities are child-initiated and adults serve as facilitators to learning. There are a variety of activities to promote small and gross motor development, literacy, spatial awareness, and social-emotional growth.

Lewis-Clark Early Childhood Program

- An annual event celebrates the diversity and uniqueness of the cultures in the ECEAP classroom through a potluck dinner that offers diverse, interesting, tasty and delightful foods. The center provides transportation for any family needing it. The children's writings, drawings and special projects are displayed and the children offer a singing presentation to their parents.

United Indians of All Tribes Foundation

- Teaching staff was gentle, relaxed, calm, nurturing and compassionate. The movement and flow of the teacher and teacher assistant in overseeing the classroom were compatible, fluid, natural. Children were at ease with the environment and staff, expressed contentment, curiosity, problem-solving ability, and respect towards each other. The children were extraordinarily polite yet able to articulate their needs in a healthy, self-actualized manner.

Mid-Columbia Children's Council, Inc.

- A national Early Head Start video featured ESD 114 highlighting how well they work with special needs children.

Olympic ESD 114



Staff Development and Staff Support

- A mentoring program was established that successfully contributed to the growth of new staff in the areas of evaluation, documentation, and understanding of education procedures.
EOC of Clark County, Inc.
- Teachers felt supported and more empowered when working with challenging students. The High/Scope curriculum usage was reported to be a great success, encouraging a wide variety of themes throughout the year and implementation of new ideas that were fun and exciting.
Skagit Valley Community College
- All teachers hold a Washington State teaching certificate with endorsements in both early childhood education and special education, plus approximately eight staff finished an agency-provided optional conversational Spanish class (with another class in the works) to meet the language needs of the growing Spanish population.
Aberdeen School District
- Monthly campus classroom site observations act as a resource to teaching staff regarding curriculum development, a discovery play based environment, and child/adult interactions. Teacher curriculum planning also incorporates the Early Learning Academic Requirements preschool frameworks. Children receive opportunities to experience a multitude of interactive activities that encourage progressive development in cognitive, physical, emotional, social and health/safety issues.
Centralia College
- A new database system was implemented and used to track enrollment, health, disabilities, and personnel. Additionally, children's main files are now in individual classrooms allowing staff ease of access to needed information and easier follow-up.
Lower Columbia College
- Demonstrated commitment to staff concerns/needs and the significant turnover in non-union represented staff by instituting a 4% increase in salary, increase in paid holidays, and an increase in the program contribution toward health insurance premiums.
ESD 113 Sound to Harbor Head Start/ECEAP



What Does Community Volunteerism Look Like?

- The foster grandparents' program provided five delightful women volunteering in the classrooms all year – each provided a different perspective and was a gem with their own sparkle.

Kittitas County Head Start/ECEAP

- Summer literacy support continued via a staff-delivered tote bag with a summer calendar of literacy activities/materials. The totes were sewn and donated by the local Fortnightly Women's Service Club.

Manson School District

- The ECFS Male Involvement Task Force obtained a Boeing grant for a project called "Men Count" in which interested fathers and grandfathers from centers were recruited and trained as mentors to work with other men at the site.

Puget Sound ESD



Providing a Classroom Can Take Great Effort

- Collaborative effort with preschool board, community parents and local contractors and parents donating all labor provided a much needed new building for an ECEAP site.

San Juan County ECEAP

- Funding provided by the Murdoch Trust and Weyerhaeuser Company Foundation moved the ECEAP blended classroom to a new location that included two bathrooms and an office for staff.

St. James Family Center

Meeting ECEAP Children’s Medical and Dental Needs

- The school district arranged for a dentist to set up a mobile exam clinic at a preschool office and parent center - the same location where the school district hosts the public health resource lending library for parents, daycare, and preschool providers throughout the community. Additionally, a new county resource guide was designed, produced and distributed.

Dayton School District

- Offered families “KidScreen”, a collaborative effort that provided families and children with physical exams (including vision, dental and immunizations).

Granger School District

- Ninety-two percent of families report well-child check-ups or physicals annually. Eighty-eight percent reported health care coverage. Partnerships are maintained with local dentists who participate in the Smile Mobile.

Kitsap Community Resources

- Sixty-eight students entered the program without being linked to an on-going source of dental care. Fifty-two have subsequently been linked to an on-going source of care and are up-to-date on dental care.

Chelan-Douglas Child Services



Parent Participation and Thoughts

- “Que nos mantienen informados sobre juntas por ejemplo: del asiento, del cinturon de seguridad para mi nino, el de hacer juntas para saber como ayudar a nuestros hijos pequenos y de hablar mas (carro). Me gusta las iniciativa de la Profesora y el trabajo que realiza.” (Translation: We received information about many things, for example: the car seat to secure my child, making things together to know how to help our young children with progress so they learn respect/enjoy reading and talking more. I like the teachings of the teacher and the working relationship.)

ESD 112 South Pacific County

- Parents are officers for the PAC (Policy and Advisory Council) and help facilitate countywide meetings and events, parent meetings and activities at their schools, and often become mentors to other parents in the program. Parents have commented that they “feel welcomed into decision making both at their child’s school and at the county.”

Snohomish County Human Services ECEAP

- Provided, in conjunction with Gonzaga University, a three-day institute on cultural competency for teachers, paraprofessionals and parents. Twenty parents received a stipend, lodging, meals, travel expenses, childcare and materials, and they reported that the training was very worthwhile.

ESD 101 Center for Early Childhood Services



Selected CSU Accomplishments

CSU staff spent considerable time in a variety of tasks designed to promote equity, streamline efforts, standardize data collection and provide leadership and support to ECEAP programs statewide. CSU staff:

- Secured 1200 booster seats from Ford Motor Company. Two-thirds of ECEAP programs teamed up with local passenger safety technicians to safely fit ECEAP children into appropriate booster seats. This effort continues.
- Revised data collection forms and systems. The ECEAP Management System (EMS) underwent extensive redesign and program upgrades, reducing duplication and simplifying data collection.
- Addressed program request to provide clarity in “home visiting” elements (adult contact hours, educational planning meetings and home education sessions) to avoid duplication of data collection and maintain effective local program practices.
- Offered the Pacific Institute “Imagine 21 – Fast Track to Change” training to ECEAP program directors to increase efficacy and goal achievement. This effort generated great excitement in program directors who found it useful and valuable.
- Initiated the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA) Program. Fourteen ECEAP contractors participated in the DECA pilot project promoting healthy social-emotional development and classroom practices and environment.
- Contracted with James Bowman & Associates (JBA) to design and implement the ECEAP Outcomes Evaluation Study. This study identifies critical outcome areas that will guide ECEAP in continually improving comprehensive services to Washington State families.



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